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Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers La. Rm 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

Ref: Docket No. 98N-1230
96P-0418
97P-0197

Gentlemen:

Why is it never enough for one of God's creatures to be exploited to the maximum of its capabilities? Why must human beings continue to devise more and more ways to wring just one last profit out of this unfortunate being?

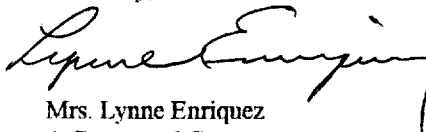
I refer to the forced molting of chickens - the bizarre practice of forcing just one more batch of eggs out of a dying and weakened bird at the end of the egg-production season. The practice of depriving the bird of food for up to 2 weeks, restricting water for up to 8 weeks, and keeping the bird in pitch darkness the whole time. And then, after enduring this torture, the bird is sent to slaughter. Is compassion a completely unknown commodity among chicken raisers? Maybe I wouldn't like to hear the answer to this question.

Salmonella has become a big issue in the United States, and more and more magazine and newspaper articles are devoting space to sanitation procedures in American kitchens. The FDA is interested in ways to reduce Salmonella in chicken eggs. Well, recent research is turning up evidence that the forced molting practice described above is increasing the frequency and severity of Salmonella enteritidis among hens. The stressful conditions weaken their immune systems so badly that they become prone to disease and Salmonella infections. The result is sick birds and contaminated eggs.

The most effective and direct way to reduce Salmonella in eggs would be to eliminate the practice of forced molting. Also, it is not enough to just put warning labels on egg cartons and regulate egg refrigeration temperatures. Chickens are not computers that can be treated heartlessly and without concern for their individual health and comfort. I know they are not the most lovable of birds; but they have provided human beings with food for thousands of years. We owe them. I do believe they are owed enough respect and consideration to make their short, exploited lives as pleasant as possible. A healthy and pleasant environment produces healthy results.

Thanks for listening to my thoughts on this very dark and unpleasant subject.


Sincerely,



Mrs. Lynne Enriquez
A Concerned Consumer

96P-0418

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CROSS FILE SHEET

File Number:

98N-1230/ C 744

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